


POLICY # 119	SUBJECT: USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA
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DELAWARE CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT

I. Purpose

Social Media provides exciting new methods for communicating with clients, our external partners and the public at large. The most popular social media channels include but are not limited to: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of social media by DSCYF employees for work-related purposes, personal use during work hours and personal use outside work hours. The policy is meant to assure that use of social media by DSCYF staff does not in any way violate the confidentiality and rights of the clients we serve or unintentionally adversely affect a staff member's employment status with the Department or its Divisions.

II. Definition

- A. *Social Media* refers to all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet including your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not it is associated or affiliated directly with DSCYF.

III. General Guidance

- A. All official DSCYF employee communication through social media should remain professional in nature and should always be conducted in accordance with Department and State policies (reference DSCYF policies 115-Communications, 205-Confidentiality, 305-Conditions of Continued Employment-Standards of Conduct and State DTI Acceptable Use, DTI Social Media policies). If an employee's work requires use of social media in a manner that is in conflict with Department or State policy the employee should consult with their supervisor to determine needed action (e.g. request waiver from DTI).
- B. To assure adherence to state and federal confidentiality laws, HIPAA etc. staff are prohibited from posting information about clients or cases on social media sites (both DSCYF and personal) directly or in ways that a client might be identified unless approved by their supervisor in consultation with Division management. Staff are also prohibited from posting any information related to safety or security of clients or staff or facilities or operations. If an employee is not sure whether

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information they are considering posting is related to safety or security, they should consult with their supervisor before posting the information.

- C. Staff should be mindful that their conduct on social media, even outside work hours, may negatively impact their credibility with colleagues and key stakeholders (e.g. Courts, etc.) and negatively impact their ability to fill the requirements of their position with the State.
- D. Any conduct on social media including DSCYF agency social media accounts which adversely affects an employee's job performance and/or inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, threats of violence or inappropriate or unlawful conduct is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination or other appropriate action.

IV. Procedures

A. Use of Social media for Work Related Purposes.

- 1. Employees who have a work-related need to have access to view social media and who have obtained their Division Director or designee approval should submit an email request for access to the Customer Engagement Manager (CEM) who will work with DTI to process the request.
- 2. To assure that all DSCYF social media accounts are well coordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the needs of the public, any creation of social media accounts must have the prior approval of the Community Relations Coordinator (CRC).
- 3. Pictures, videos and sound recording of clients which identify clients visually and/or by full name may only be used on social media if previously approved by the CRC and with the written consent of the client (age 18 or older) or their parent/legal guardian (under age 18).
- 4. With the exception of the HR manager or their designee, staff are prohibited from searching for or using information on social media in any aspect of the hiring process. Hiring managers who believe that it is necessary to search social media must consult first with their HR specialist.

B. Use of Social Media for Personal Use during Work Hours

- 1. Employees should refrain from using social media while on work time or on state issued equipment unless it is work-related and authorized by their Director or designee or is consistent with the DTI Acceptable Use and Social Media Policies.

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2. DSCYF employees may not use official agency social media for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions, or to engage in private business activities.

C. Use of Social Media for Personal Use Outside Work Hours

1. DSCYF recognizes the rights of employees to use social media for personal use. These sites should remain personal in nature and be used to share personal opinions or non-work related information. The following rules help ensure a distinction between sharing personal and agency views.

- a. If commenting about Department business, policy or practice on a personal, DSCYF or stakeholder social media account, employees must begin the post with the following statement “The following post reflects my own personal opinion”.
- b. Employees should avoid engaging with clients of the Department on their personal social media sites unless they receive prior approval from their supervisor. To reduce the possibility of clients posting on employee’s personal social media sites, it is recommended that settings on personal pages should be made private. Employees should not respond to posts made by clients or family members of clients on their personal social media sites. If a client or family member posts to an employee’s personal site, it is recommended that the employee delete the post and private message the individual to explain why this was done.
- c. Employees are not permitted to use their State agency e-mail account or password in conjunction with a personal social media site.
- d. The DSCYF CRC reserves the right to remove employee posting on the Department’s social media sites if the content is considered offensive, inflammatory, inappropriate or detrimental to or in conflict with the best interests of the Department and/or its policies or clients.
- e. DSCYF employees may not use the Department brand marks or logos in personal blogs or postings.

V. Adherence to the Policy

A. All employees are responsible for being aware of and complying with the content of this policy. Employees who fail to comply with this policy are subject to disciplinary

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action up to and including termination and/or other appropriate action. This policy is not intended to create any individual right or cause of action not already existing and recognized under state or federal law.

VI. Responsibility for the Policy

- A. The DSCYF Community Relations Coordinator, DSCYF Policy Workgroup and the Division Media Liaisons are responsible for providing guidance regarding this policy.